

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 963

By Dickerson

A RESOLUTION to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the Nashville Shakespeare Festival.

WHEREAS, this General Assembly takes great pleasure in recognizing an organization that has set the community standard of excellence in performances of William Shakespeare's plays, each of which has proven to be "a hit, a very palpable hit"; and

WHEREAS, for thirty years, the Nashville Shakespeare Festival (NSF) has enriched and unified the community with bold and innovative Shakespearean productions that are "such stuff as dreams are made on"; and

WHEREAS, in 1988, a group of local actors produced the first free-of-charge Shakespeare in the Park production of *As You Like It* in Centennial Park, proving conclusively that "all the world's a stage"; and

WHEREAS, inspired by strong support from the community for the first production, the founders followed up with a second free production in the park, *Pericles*, in 1989, and even though "few love to hear the sins they love to act," the Nashville Shakespeare Festival was born; and

WHEREAS, the first professional production of Shakespeare in the Park, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, followed in 1990, with "twenty lascivious turtles," "one chaste man," and many Nashvillians in attendance; and

WHEREAS, since that time, NSF has grown into one of the region's leading professional theatres; each summer, 12,000 to 17,000 people attend, free-of-charge, the annual Shakespeare in Park production, which features a "play to ease the anguish of a torturing hour"; and

WHEREAS, in 1992, NSF developed its first educational outreach program for Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools, a series of abridged versions of Shakespeare's best-known works, *Shakespeare Samplers*; and

WHEREAS, through the years, more than 195,000 students, many of whom had never experienced live theatre before, have been introduced to Shakespeare through the Festival's workshops and performances; and

WHEREAS, in 2008, the Nashville Shakespeare Festival established its annual Winter (of Our Discontent) Shakespeare production in residence at Belmont University's Troutt Theater; its first eight winter productions, *Hamlet*, *Richard III*, *The Tempest*, *Shakespeare's Case*, *Julius Caesar*, *Macbeth*, *Othello*, *Twelfth Night*, *King Lear*, and *Romeo and Juliet*, have entertained more than 46,000 students and adults; and

WHEREAS, now in its seventh year, Shakespeare Allowed, offered in partnership with the Nashville Public Library, brings together people from all walks of life to participate in reading Shakespeare aloud in a public setting, speaking "the speech...trippingly on the tongue"; and

WHEREAS, confident that "the golden age is before us, not behind us," NSF celebrates Shakespeare's birthday with "The Biggest Balcony Scene Ever" in one of Nashville's public parks and sponsors Scholar Nights, during which university professors discuss the Bard's plays with a public audience; and

WHEREAS, knowing that "the play's the thing," the Nashville Shakespeare Festival has remained faithful to its mission of educating and entertaining the community through professional Shakespearean experiences for thirty years, and the Festival should be recognized on this special occasion; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED TENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that, on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the Nashville Shakespeare Festival, we honor and commend its board of directors, management, staff, and actors for

bringing Shakespeare to life in "this wide and universal theatre" and extend to them our best wishes for much continued success "tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow."

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.